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Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

My Brother Sam Is Dead

James Lincoln Collier
& Christopher Collier

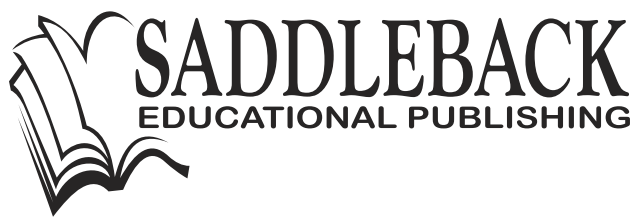
ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

Focus **ON READING**

*My Brother
Sam Is Dead*

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Introduction/Classroom Management

WELCOME TO *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading literature study guides are designed to help all students comprehend and analyze their reading. Many teachers have grappled with the question of how to make quality literature accessible to all students. Students who are already avid readers of quality literature are motivated to read and are familiar with prereading and reading strategies. However, struggling readers frequently lack basic reading skills and are not equipped with the prior knowledge and reading strategies to thoroughly engage in the classroom literature experience.

Focus on Reading is designed to make teachers' and students' lives easier! How? By providing materials that allow all students to take part in reading quality literature. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains activities that focus on vocabulary and comprehension skills that students need to get the most from their reading. In addition, each section within the guide contains a before-reading **Focus Your Reading** page containing tools to ensure success: **Vocabulary Words to Know**, **Things to Know**, and **Questions to Think About**. These study aids will help students who may not have the prior knowledge they need to truly comprehend the reading.

USING *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading is designed to make it easy for you to meet the individual needs of students who require additional reading skills support. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains teacher and student support materials, reproducible student activity sheets, an end-of-book test, and an answer key.

- **Focus on the Book**, a convenient reference page for the teacher, provides a brief overview of the entire book including a synopsis, information about the setting, author data, and historical background.
- **Focus Your Knowledge**, a reference page for students, is a whole-book, prereading activity designed to activate prior knowledge and immerse students in the topic.

The study guide divides the novel into 6 manageable sections to make it easy to plan classroom time. Five activities are devoted to each section of the novel.

Before Reading

- **Focus Your Reading** consists of 3 prereading sections:

Vocabulary Words to Know lists and defines 10 vocabulary words students will encounter in their reading. Students will not have to interrupt their reading to look up, ask for, or spend a lot of time figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words. These words are later studied in-depth within the lesson.

Things to Know identifies terms or concepts that are integral to the reading but that may not be familiar to today's students. This section is intended to "level the playing field" for those students who may not have much prior knowledge about the time period, culture, or theme of the book. It also gets students involved with the book, increasing interest before they begin reading.

Questions to Think About helps students focus on the main ideas and important details they should be looking for as they read. This activity helps give students a *purpose* for reading. The goal of these guiding questions is to build knowledge, confidence, and comfort with the topics in the reading.

During Reading

- **Build Your Vocabulary** presents the 10 unit focus words in the exact context of the book. Students are then asked to write their own definitions and sentences for the words.
- **Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice** offers 10 multiple-choice, literal comprehension questions for each section.
- **Check Your Understanding: Short Answer** contains 10 short-answer questions based on the reading.

After Reading

- **Deepen Your Understanding** is a writing activity that extends appreciation and analysis of the book. This activity focuses on critical-thinking skills and literary analysis.
- **End-of-Book Test** contains 20 multiple-choice items covering the book. These items ask questions that require students to synthesize the information in the book and make inferences in their answers.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Focus on Reading is very flexible. It can be used by the whole class, by small groups, or by individuals. Each study guide divides the novel into 6 manageable units of study.

This literature comprehension program is simple to use. Just photocopy the lessons and distribute them at the appropriate time as students read the novel.

You may want to reproduce and discuss the **Focus Your Knowledge** page before distributing the paperbacks. This page develops and activates prior knowledge to ensure that students have a grounding in the book before beginning reading. After reading this whole-book prereading page, students are ready to dive into the book.

The **Focus Your Reading** prereading activities are the keystone of this program. They prepare students for what they are going to read, providing focus for the complex task of reading. These pages should be distributed before students actually begin reading the corresponding section of the novel. There are no questions to be answered on these pages; these are for reference and support during reading. Students may choose to take notes on these pages as they read. This will also give students a study tool for review before the **End-of-Book Test**.

The **Focus Your Reading** pages also provide an excellent bridge to home. Parents, mentors, tutors, or

other involved adults can review vocabulary words with students, offer their own insights about the historical and cultural background outlined, and become familiar with the ideas students will be reading about. This can help families talk to students in a meaningful way about their reading, and it gives the adults something concrete to ask about to be sure that students are reading and understanding.

The **Build Your Vocabulary** and **Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice** and **Short Answer** activities should be distributed when students begin reading the corresponding section of the novel. These literature guide pages are intended to help students comprehend and retain what they read; they should be available for students to refer to at any time during the reading.

Deepen Your Understanding is an optional extension activity that goes beyond literal questions about the book, asking students for their own ideas and opinions—and the reasons behind them. These postreading activities generally focus on literary analysis.

As reflected in its title, the **End-of-Book Test** is a postreading comprehension test to be completed after the entire novel has been read.

For your convenience, a clear **Answer Key** simplifies the scoring process.

Focus on the Book

Synopsis

Ten-year-old Tim Meeker is the son of tavern owners in Redding Ridge, Connecticut. He has always worshiped his older brother, Sam, admiring especially his intelligence and bold ways. One evening in April 1775, Sam suddenly returns home from his college studies at Yale, announcing that he has enlisted as a Patriot to fight for his country's independence from England. The Meeker family's distress over their sixteen-year-old son's enlistment is made worse by the fact that they are a Loyalist family, with strong ties to King George III and the British Parliament. As Tim narrates the series of family conflicts that follow, major events from the first half of the American Revolution are interwoven with the daily events and challenges that the Meekers and their neighbors face. The four years chronicled by Tim reflect not only America's early steps toward independence, but also Tim's own dramatic, sometimes painful, journey to young adulthood. During this journey, he questions the morality of war and the high price paid by ordinary men and women caught in extraordinary situations.

About the Authors

James Lincoln Collier (born in 1928) and Christopher Collier (born in 1930) are members of an old New England family with a rich literary tradition. Both brothers have written prolifically and have won distinguished awards for their work.

James Collier began his professional career as a magazine editor; he has since written hundreds of articles for nationally known publications. In addition, he has written and published twenty-three children's books, five in collaboration with his brother Christopher. James Collier is also a professional trombonist who writes both fiction and nonfiction works about music.

Christopher Collier has spent much of his professional life as a history teacher and college professor. His experiences with traditional school textbooks led him to believe that "there must be a better way to teach American History." Thus began Christopher Collier's collaboration with his brother James. Christopher explains, "I research all the historical material and give [James] a true story with all the detail. Then we make up some fictional characters, and he

writes the true story about those fictional characters. In that way we are able to write books that tell about the real historical past and at the same time are very exciting stories full of interesting characters."

The brothers' collaborations are generally about New England during the American Revolution, in which Christopher specializes. The primary setting in their young-adult novel *My Brother Sam Is Dead* is western Connecticut, where the Colliers grew up. The book, first published in 1974, was a Newbery Honor Book in 1975. It was also nominated for a National Book Award and was chosen as a Notable Book by the American Library Association.

Historical Background

The American Revolution is often thought of as beginning with "the shot heard 'round the world"—the first shot fired on April 19, 1775, in Lexington, Massachusetts. Who actually fired remains a mystery to this day, but there is certainly no doubt about the ramifications of that act. The eight years of war that followed brought turmoil and hardship to the American colonies, caused divided loyalties among family members and their friends and neighbors, and ultimately gave birth to the democratic republic of the United States of America.

My Brother Sam Is Dead reflects that tumultuous time in U.S. history leading up to and including the first half of the war. In the first pages of the book, there is a reference to the Boston Tea Party, which had occurred about sixteen months earlier (December 16, 1773). On that moonlit night, fifty or sixty colonists disguised as American Indians threw three shiploads of tea into Boston Harbor to protest the British tea taxes. This angered the already impatient British government, leading it to impose a series of restrictive colonial laws that were collectively known as the Intolerable Acts. The colonists reacted by assembling the First Continental Congress in 1774. The key resolutions passed by this congress included the boycotting of all British goods and the call for each colony to establish and train its own militia. Local branches of the Connecticut militia are mentioned frequently in the novel.

(continued)

Focus on the Book (continued)

During the fighting at Lexington and Concord, a small group of Rebels managed to drive about seven hundred British Redcoats back to Boston, with very few American lives lost. This event signaled that a peaceful settlement of the quarrel between Britain and the American colonies was unlikely. Just one month later, Ethan Allen of Vermont and his Green Mountain Boys captured Fort Ticonderoga from the British. Although the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia just afterward, and its delegates decided to give a peaceful settlement one last chance by sending the Olive Branch Petition to King George III, that same congress also set up the Continental Army, with George Washington as its commander. Events soon escalated from there, especially when the colonists learned that George III would not respond directly to their petition—and was, in fact, enraged by it.

The Battle of Bunker Hill took place on June 16, 1775. This was the first major battle of the Revolutionary War, and, although the British officially won, they suffered very heavy losses and were shocked by the spirit and resistance of the Patriot force. This resistance continued—so successfully that, less than one year later, British General Howe removed his troops from Boston to relocate in Halifax, Canada. In the summer of 1776, Howe would attack once more, but this time farther south—in New York. The Battle of Long Island, which took place in August, was a major

defeat for General George Washington and his troops. They began a series of retreats that led them first to Manhattan, then over the Hudson River to New Jersey, and finally over the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

The fall and winter of 1776 were extremely difficult for the underclothed, underfed Continental Army. Even General Washington feared that they would soon succumb. However, in a brilliant surprise attack on the day after Christmas, Washington led his men to a major victory at the Battle of Trenton, shortly followed by another win in Princeton.

The British responded by attempting to cut off New England from the rest of the colonies through control of the Hudson River. Over the next year, the British recaptured Fort Ticonderoga but later suffered a serious defeat at the Battle of Saratoga in October 1777. This was one of the most significant battles of the war, since this Patriot victory persuaded the French that the Americans would ultimately win the war. In February 1778, France signed a treaty with the United States, agreeing to give the new nation military support.

Unfortunately, help from France did not come soon enough for the Continental Army, which endured the terrible winter of 1777–1778 at Valley Forge. In fact, the tide did not really turn in favor of the Patriots until 1780—after the story told by Tim in *My Brother Sam Is Dead* is over.

Focus Your Knowledge

The American Revolutionary War (1775–1783) was an eight-year conflict. When it was over, the thirteen former colonies had separated from their mother country, England, and had created the republic of the United States of America. This was a long, hard struggle, during which many thousands of people—from both England and the colonies—were killed or wounded.

- Look at a map of the United States. Find the thirteen states that comprised the original thirteen colonies: Massachusetts (which included Maine), Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. What do you notice about their locations? What do you know about why these colonies were established? Who were their first settlers?
- Now look at the map of the colonies. Find Boston. Why do you think that Boston was one of the most important cities in colonial America?
- Now focus on New York. Where is the city of New York located? Why do you think that this was another very important city in colonial America?
- Find the Hudson River. What do you notice about its location in relation to the former New England colonies? Where does the Hudson River begin and end? Why did the colonists find this river so useful?
- Now think about the American colonists who lived during the Revolutionary War. From what country did most of these colonists—or their parents or their grandparents—come? How do you think this would have affected their feelings, their loyalties, and their actions during the war?



Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

ammunitions—explosives, bullets, and other materials used by the military

massacred—killed; slaughtered

prevail—to be successful through persistent effort

constitutes—forms; composes; makes up

vicious—fierce; savage; cruel

civil—polite; courteous

triumphant—proud of a victory or conquest

inscription—something specially written or engraved, often to autograph or dedicate something

subversion—working secretly to overthrow a government

cordial—warm; gracious

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Captain (later General) Benedict Arnold was a skilled and daring Patriot leader in the early years of the Revolutionary War. In 1780, however, he betrayed his country, offering to hand the fort at West Point over to the British.

Lexington and **Concord** were the two Massachusetts towns near Boston where the first fighting of the Revolutionary War occurred on April 19, 1775.

Minutemen were the first volunteer soldiers in Massachusetts who met and trained regularly to fight for independence from Britain. They got their name from always having their muskets near at hand, so that they were ready to fight with just a minute's notice.

Lobsterbacks was a slang term for British soldiers. They got this name because of the long, bright red coats they wore as their uniform.

Tories, or **Loyalists**, were American colonists who supported King George III and the British Parliament.

Patriots, or **Rebels**, were American colonists who wanted independence from the British throne.

Yale University is one of the oldest private universities in the United States, established in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1718. This is the university that Sam Meeker attends.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. How does Sam's arrival change the atmosphere in the tavern?
2. What are the narrator's feelings about his brother, Sam? How does the author show these feelings to the reader?
3. What sort of relationship do Sam and his father seem to have?
4. What role does religion play in the life of the narrator and his community as a whole?
5. What is the importance of the Brown Bess to different members of the family?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “Some of the Massachusetts Minutemen tried to stop them there in the square, but there were too many British, and they got through and went on up to Concord looking for **ammunitions** stores.”
ammunitions: _____
2. “And then when they [the Lobsterbacks] turned around and went back, the Minutemen hid in the fields along the roads and **massacred** them all the way back to Boston.”
massacred: _____
3. “I think men of common sense will **prevail**. Nobody wants rebellion except fools and hotheads.”
prevail: _____
4. “In my house *I* will decide what **constitutes** treason.”
constitutes: _____
5. “We’ve had these things before—that **vicious** nonsense of those madmen dressing up like Indians and throwing tea into Boston Harbor, . . .”
vicious: _____
6. “My mother hated it when Father hit Sam for speaking out, but . . . she believed that Father was right, children ought to keep a **civil** tongue in their heads.”
civil: _____
7. “Sam was a **triumphant** sort of a person. He always had some victories to tell about whenever he came home from college.”
triumphant: _____
8. “And I guess most of his boasts were true: he was always bringing home some book in Latin or Greek with an **inscription** saying he had won it for some telling point he had scored.”
inscription: _____
9. “I will not have **subversion**, I will not have treason in my house.”
subversion: _____
10. “They wanted to keep up with the news, and Father always spent some time with them—it was good business, Father said, to be **cordial** with people.”
cordial: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. When Sam arrives home at the beginning of the book, his family has not seen him since when?
 - a. his last birthday
 - b. Christmas
 - c. Easter
2. What does Sam say that the Minutemen have done?
 - a. They have beaten the British.
 - b. They have been beaten by the British.
 - c. They marched out of Boston the day before.
3. What does Mother do after Sam enters the tavern?
 - a. She begins to cry.
 - b. She serves him some dinner.
 - c. She asks him who fired the first shot.
4. What does Father call the Lobsterbacks?
 - a. the Governor's Second Foot Guard
 - b. Patriots
 - c. the soldiers of the King
5. Who does Father say is speaking treason in his house?
 - a. Mr. Beach
 - b. one of the farmers in the tavern
 - c. Sam
6. How old is Sam at the beginning of the story?
 - a. 14
 - b. 16
 - c. 18
7. What is the Brown Bess?
 - a. the family's best milking cow
 - b. the wagon that Father drives
 - c. the family's gun
8. What strange sound does the narrator hear after Father tells Sam to leave the house?
 - a. Father cleaning the gun
 - b. Father pounding the table
 - c. Father crying
9. What side are most of the people in Redding Ridge on when the story begins?
 - a. the Tory side
 - b. the Papist side
 - c. the Patriot side
10. Where does Tim tell his father he is going after church?
 - a. to become a soldier
 - b. to Tom Warrups's hut
 - c. to help Jerry Sanford

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. How do the authors use physical description to show the way Sam enters the tavern at the start of the story?
2. How does the narrator feel when he sees Sam in his new uniform?
3. How does Sam appear to be feeling about himself that evening when he gets home?
4. Why does Father act irritated with Sam at the dinner table?
5. What does Sam say about the people in Redding versus the people in New Haven and other towns?
6. How does Father often punish Sam for speaking out?
7. Why does the narrator say that Sam can't boast about his successes?
8. Where has Sam run away to in the past, and why?
9. What sort of business does the narrator's family own and run?
10. When, and how, does the reader find out what the narrator's name is? What is his name?

Deepen Your Understanding

Setting is the time and place in which a story happens. An author can show the setting of a story in many different ways: by giving physical descriptions of objects in the environment, by mentioning real events from history that are supposed to be happening at the time of the story, and even by describing the atmosphere or “feeling” of a place and time.

How do the authors of *My Brother Sam Is Dead* reveal the setting? Consider all the different ways in which they have placed the story in time and space, giving specific examples from the text.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

livestock—farm animals being raised for use or for sale

almanacs—books containing facts, statistics, weather predictions, and other general information

linger—to move slowly; to delay leaving a place

idling—being lazy; not working or being useful

wavering—moving unsteadily; swaying back and forth

taproom—a barroom; a place to buy alcoholic drinks

hinged—attached to another surface (like a wall or door frame) by a flexible piece of metal, leather, or other material

rebelliousness—the state of disobeying or opposing someone in authority

disarm—to take weapons away from

lunged—pushed forward with great force

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Fort Ticonderoga was a British fort at the southern end of Lake Champlain. In early May 1775, the fort was captured by the Patriot fighter Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys. This was an important early victory, because it gave the Patriots valuable cannons and easier access to Canada to the north.

The Battle of Bunker Hill was actually fought on nearby Breeds Hill, on the outskirts of Boston, on June 16, 1775. Although the British ultimately won the battle, they suffered nearly three times as many losses as the hard-fighting Patriots.

Mumble-the-peg (or **mumblety-peg**) was a popular game played by colonial boys. Players tried to flip a jackknife in the air and have it land with its blade pointing into the ground.

By the late eighteenth century (when this story takes place), much of the land immediately surrounding the villages and towns in New England was cleared or cultivated. Therefore, to maintain their supply of firewood and other wood products, many families bought **woodlots**, or forested land, outside town to use as needed.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. At this point, how is the war affecting Tim and his family in their daily lives?

2. How does the family handle Sam's being away?

3. Why does Sam come back to Redding? What does this show about his feelings for his family?

4. How does Tim's relationship with Sam begin to change?

5. What role does Betsy Read play in the story?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “And of course there’s the **livestock** I have to care for, too.”
livestock: _____
2. “Or if nobody was watching me, I’d sneak up into the loft and look at the old **almanacs** Sam brought back from college sometimes.”
almanacs: _____
3. “She came into the tavern pretty often to buy thread or cloth or something, and I noticed that when she did she’d **linger** around on some excuse and try to listen to what people were saying. . . .”
linger: _____
4. “Betsy, I don’t think your mother intended for you to spend the day **idling**. . . .”
idling: _____
5. “The geese flew south in long, **wavering** V’s.”
wavering: _____
6. “Mother was out with the chickens, but Father was in the **taproom** sharpening the two-man saw, because we were going out to the woodlot.”
taproom: _____
7. “The door to the taproom was mostly closed, but there was a crack where it was **hinged** onto the wall.”
hinged: _____
8. “It made me realize where Sam got his **rebelliousness** from, though.”
rebelliousness: _____
9. “Because Redding had such a reputation for being a Tory town, the Rebels had decided to **disarm** it—at least disarm the Tories.”
disarm: _____
10. “He **lunged** at me, grabbing for the muzzle of the gun.”
lunged: _____

II. CHAPTERS III–IV

DURING READING

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. What does Tim say about life in Redding when the war begins?
 - a. There are men marching and drilling in town.
 - b. Life just seems normal.
 - c. There are some small battles nearby.
2. Why isn't Father supposed to have *Rivington's Gazette*?
 - a. It is published by Patriots, whom he does not support.
 - b. Mother thinks that reading the paper makes him too angry.
 - c. It is illegal.
3. What does Tim say about being the son of a tavern keeper?
 - a. It is better than being a farmer's son.
 - b. It is worse than being a farmer's son.
 - c. It is easier than going to college.
4. What does Betsy Read ask Tim one day in September?
 - a. if he will help her steal his father's gun
 - b. whether he can smuggle some food and drink to Sam
 - c. whether he would tell his father if Sam came back to visit
5. When does Sam return to Redding for the first time after fighting with his father?
 - a. in November 1775
 - b. in April 1775
 - c. in August 1775
6. Who demands that Father turn in his gun?
 - a. a Patriot soldier
 - b. Colonel Read
 - c. Tom Warrups
7. Where does Tim run when Father gets cut on the cheek?
 - a. to the church
 - b. to Colonel Read's house
 - c. to Tom Warrups's hut
8. What happens when Sam grabs the muzzle of the gun from Tim?
 - a. Tim tries to fire the gun.
 - b. Sam gets cut.
 - c. The gun goes off by accident.
9. Why does Sam say that he's not supposed to be in Redding?
 - a. because he is supposed to be in Danbury buying cattle
 - b. because he was ordered to Fort Ticonderoga by Captain Champion
 - c. because the Connecticut General Assembly has made it illegal for Patriot soldiers to come through the town
10. What does Sam say when Tim asks if he has ever killed anyone?
 - a. that he has shot one enemy soldier
 - b. that he has not done any fighting yet
 - c. that he is too cowardly to shoot anyone

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What specific historical events are going on outside of Redding at this time?
2. How does Father react to the stranger in the tavern who makes a comment about Lobsterbacks?
3. Which big towns and cities do visitors to the tavern come from?
4. What activities do Tim and Jerry Sanford enjoy when they are not doing chores?
5. What kinds of comments does Mother make to Betsy Read when she comes to the tavern?
6. What does Betsy make Tim promise?
7. How long does Tim have to wait before Sam finally returns?
8. How does Tim get back to the tavern from the woodlot after he sees the Rebel soldiers?
9. What does Tim do to try to help Father?
10. Why does Tim call Sam a coward?

Deepen Your Understanding

Character is the combination of qualities or traits that make someone an individual. While people often share many common qualities, no two people on earth have exactly the same character.

Using specific examples from the book, describe the character of Tim. How does he feel and act within his family and his community? How does he seem to react to authority figures? How does he compare himself with others, particularly Sam and Betsy? Give as complete a description as possible based on your reading so far.

Then give your opinion of Tim. Is he someone you would like to know? Does he remind you of yourself in some ways—or of someone you know?

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

commissary—army officer in charge of providing the soldiers with food and other supplies

petition—a written document asking for something from a person or group in power

skirmishes—small fights that take place during a larger war

surveyor—someone who makes a living by carefully measuring and mapping the boundaries and features of other people's land

ciphering—to make mathematical calculations or computations

apprentice—someone who is learning a trade from someone else and who is usually working for little or no money

speculating—taking a business risk; buying something in order to sell it later for a higher price

cholera—a severe intestinal disease

dishonorable—shameful; without honor

suspicious—thoughts that someone may be doing something wrong

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Aaron Burr was a Revolutionary War officer who came from a distinguished New England family. He was on Benedict Arnold's staff early in the war, then served under both George Washington and Israel Putnam. Burr later became the third vice president of the United States (1801–1805). He is best known, though, for killing Alexander Hamilton in a duel.

A **shilling** was a coin in the old British monetary system, worth about 1/20 of a pound, the basic British monetary unit. Colonial Americans used the British system until the Revolutionary War.

A **pitched battle** is a battle in which both sides are engaged in intense fighting, facing each other in close combat.

Even though **slavery** would soon become illegal in most of the New England states, at the point in this story when Tim says that Mr. Heron “owned a black man,” it was still allowed in the colonies.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. How is the war beginning to affect the Meeker family and other inhabitants of Redding?

2. In what ways does Tim feel torn between the Loyalist side and the Patriot side?

3. How is Tim beginning to realize that “growing up” is not always as wonderful as one imagines as a young child?

4. What role does Tom Warrups play in the story?

5. What role does Mr. Meeker play?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “Army **commissary** officers, like the one Sam was working for, were buying up a lot of the livestock to feed the troops.”
commissary: _____
2. “Oh, whenever it happened the people would get up a **petition** and complain, but it never did much good because the soldiers were gone and the beef was eaten.”
petition: _____
3. ““They can win these **skirmishes** in the woods, but as soon as the British catch them in pitched battle they’ll be done for, and no good can come out of it but a lot of men dead.””
skirmishes: _____
4. “He’d been to Trinity College in Dublin, and he was a **surveyor**.”
surveyor: _____
5. “I liked **ciphering** all right, but I didn’t care much for spelling and studying the Bible and memorizing psalms.”
ciphering: _____
6. ““Perhaps I might take him on as an **apprentice** in a year or two, once he’s learned to cipher.””
apprentice: _____
7. “Father said that surveyors always knew about the good deals on land and could get rich **speculating**.”
speculating: _____
8. ““They don’t last very long. **Cholera** gets them or consumption or something else, and they die.””
cholera: _____
9. “And even if it hadn’t been a sin I would have felt badly about it, because Father trusted me and I was being **dishonorable**.”
dishonorable: _____
10. ““It will take you at least five hours to walk down there and five to walk back, and you’ll have to be home before dark in order not to raise **suspensions**.””
suspensions: _____

III. CHAPTERS V–VI

DURING READING

*Check Your Understanding**Multiple Choice*

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. According to Tim, what is a real problem in the winter of 1776?
 - a. the number of Rebel soldiers who drank at the tavern
 - b. the fighting between Patriot and Loyalist troops in Redding
 - c. the shortage of food
2. Up to now, how have Tim and his family mostly learned about the war?
 - a. the newspaper and visitors to the tavern
 - b. letters from Sam and Mr. Heron
 - c. Mr. Heron and visiting soldiers
3. What does Tim say about who is winning the war?
 - a. He is sure that the Patriots are winning.
 - b. He is sure that the Loyalists are winning.
 - c. He says it is hard to tell.
4. Why did Mr. Heron have to leave the Connecticut General Assembly?
 - a. because he owned a black slave
 - b. because he was a Tory
 - c. because he was a spy
5. What would Sam learn to do if he apprenticed himself to Mr. Heron?
 - a. ciphering
 - b. surveying
 - c. building construction
6. Why doesn't Tom Warrups sit down in the tavern?
 - a. because there are not enough chairs
 - b. because he does not believe in drinking
 - c. because he is an Indian
7. What sacrifice does Father say he has already made to the war?
 - a. He has lost a son.
 - b. He has lost a great deal of business.
 - c. He has lost some cattle to the soldiers.
8. What does Father say about Mr. Heron's business letters?
 - a. They are very important.
 - b. They are not really business letters.
 - c. They will help Tim get ahead in life.
9. What does Tim do as he walks to Mr. Heron's house in the morning?
 - a. silently recites a psalm
 - b. whispers a prayer that he won't get caught
 - c. whistles "Yankee Doodle"
10. What does Betsy say will happen if Tim delivers the letter?
 - a. The Patriots will never win the war.
 - b. Sam will be killed.
 - c. Tim will be put in jail.

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What does the cut on Father's face look like now?
2. Why do the people of Redding need their guns?
3. What does Tim say is especially bad about losing a milking cow?
4. Why are the Meekers forced to raise their prices in the tavern?
5. What does Tim say is the difference between having Sam away at Yale and having him away at war?
6. Where does Mr. Heron's money come from?
7. Why does Mr. Heron say that it would be better for Tim, not Tom Warrups, to deliver the letter?
8. Why does Tim decide to deliver the letter even though he knows it is wrong?
9. What things in Mr. Heron's house give Tim the impression that it is "rich"?
10. How long will it probably take for Tim to get to Fairfield and back?

Deepen Your Understanding

Conflict is what gives a story its dramatic interest. Conflict is a problem or struggle. There are several different types of conflict. One is a struggle between two or more characters. Another is a struggle between two or more institutions or groups of people. Most story plots reflect these conflicts and how they get resolved.

My Brother Sam Is Dead is all about conflict of many different types, between a variety of people and groups. Describe as many of these conflicts as you can, based on your reading so far. Then, predict how you think these various conflicts will be resolved.

IV. CHAPTERS VII–IX

BEFORE READING

*Focus Your Reading**Vocabulary Words to Know*

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

enlistment—the act of being a working member of a military force (like the army)

magnificent—grand; great

plundering—looting; taking things from other people's homes

gesturing—making a sign by moving one's hands or other parts of the body

clapboard—long, narrow strips of board used for the exterior siding of a building

pallets—simple mattresses stuffed with straw

decency—proper behavior

retaliates—gets back at someone for a harm that has been done

negotiated—made a successful deal through discussion with another person or group

livelihood—a way of earning a living

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

In June 1776, a large fleet of British ships, under the command of General Howe, arrived in **New York** harbor. In August, the Patriots suffered a major loss during the Battle of Long Island. They retreated to Manhattan but were soon chased out by the British. These are the “New York” events referred to in Sam’s letters.

The **Hudson River** was a major north-south transportation and trade route that reached from Albany down to the great harbor of New York. Many major settlements and towns were located along the banks of the Hudson, such as Verplancks Point, where Tim and his father go to sell their cattle in this story. During the Revolutionary War, both the British side and the Patriots fought for control of the Hudson.

A **hogshead** is a large barrel that can hold at least 63 gallons of liquid.

Jerked beef was a common food item in colonial New England. It consisted of long, thin strips of beef that had been dried in the sun. This drying method preserved the beef for long periods of time.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. How is Mother beginning to change in her behavior toward Father?
2. What do Sam's letters reflect about real events from the Revolutionary War?
3. What type of planning was needed for an eighteenth-century journey like the one Father and Tim take to Verplancks Point?
4. How do the authors create the change in mood between the start of the trip to Verplancks Point and the finish?
5. How is Tim's journey to Verplancks Point and back also a journey toward adulthood for him?

IV. CHAPTERS VII–IX

DURING READING

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “Or we might see a soldier who had been wounded or whose **enlistment** was up walking back to his home.”
enlistment: _____
2. “He said that his regiment had made a **magnificent** retreat, and the British were lucky they’d got out of it alive, but it sounded the other way around to me.”
magnificent: _____
3. “All of that part of Westchester County, from the Connecticut border over to the Hudson River, had gotten to be a kind of no man’s land, with roving bands wandering around **plundering** people on the excuse that they were part of the war.”
plundering: _____
4. “I could see him **gesturing**—pointing up the road and then out to me as he explained something to the men.”
gesturing: _____
5. “My North Salem cousins lived in a **clapboard** farmhouse just off the Ridgefield Road.”
clapboard: _____
6. “The boys slept out in the barn except during the coldest weather, when they made up **pallets** on the floor in front of the kitchen fireplace.”
pallets: _____
7. “‘Lawlessness has run wild, common **decency** between people has disappeared, every man is armed against his neighbor.’”
decency: _____
8. “Both sides are doing it—one side burns a house and the other side **retaliates**.”
retaliates: _____
9. “He had got a good price for the cattle and had **negotiated** for most of the other things he wanted to bring back to Redding.”
negotiated: _____
10. “I could always run up into the fields and save myself, but the point was to try to get the wagon home so we could earn our **livelihood** through the winter.”
livelihood: _____

IV. CHAPTERS VII–IX

DURING READING

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. Why is leather scarce in late 1776?
 - a. because so many leather factories have closed in the colonies
 - b. because it is all being used for the soldiers' shoes and clothes
 - c. because too much of it is being shipped to England
2. How many letters come from Sam in the summer of 1776?
 - a. none
 - b. one
 - c. two
3. Why does Father say that Sam needs to learn a lesson?
 - a. because he thinks Sam is not working hard enough
 - b. because he thinks Sam is too headstrong
 - c. because Sam's teachers at Yale are upset with him
4. How long will the round-trip to Verplancks Point take Tim and Father?
 - a. six days
 - b. seven days
 - c. eight days
5. When do Tim and Father leave home for Verplancks Point?
 - a. November 15, 1776
 - b. November 20, 1776
 - c. November 22, 1776
6. Why don't Tim and Father hear the men riding up after lunch on the first day of the trip?
 - a. because the cattle are making so much noise
 - b. because they are so busy talking
 - c. because they are in a tavern in Ridgebury
7. Where does the cow-boy say Father's beef will end up if it is sold at Verplancks Point?
 - a. in England
 - b. with Rebels in New York
 - c. with Lobsterbacks in New York
8. What does Mr. Platt say helps to keep law and order in North Salem?
 - a. Committees of Safety
 - b. the Connecticut General Assembly
 - c. the local militia
9. What type of fish are the men and boys cleaning in the sheds on the wharf?
 - a. shad
 - b. sturgeon
 - c. cod
10. On the way home, how does Tim know that something has happened to Father somewhere beyond Ridgebury?
 - a. The man in the farmhouse on the hillside tells him.
 - b. He finds a note from Father in the snow.
 - c. He can tell from the hoofprints in the mud and snow.

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. How does Mr. Heron react to the fact that Tim has failed to deliver the letter to Fairfield?
2. What physical shape are the Patriot soldiers in, according to Sam's letters?
3. How does Mother respond when Father tells her he does not want her to answer Sam's second letter?
4. Why does Tim get to go with Father on the trip to Verplancks Point this year?
5. Why is Verplancks Point an important trading town?
6. Why did Father like to make this trip very close to wintertime?
7. According to what Father tells the cow-boy, how does he feel about who buys his beef cattle?
8. What drives the cow-boys away on the first day of the trip?
9. What does Mr. Platt say is happening between Rebels and Tories in Westchester County?
10. How does Tim manage to drive away the cow-boys on the trip home from Verplancks Point?

Deepen Your Understanding

A *metaphor* is a literary device in which one thing is compared with another thing, person, or idea. This comparison is indirect; “comparing” words like *as* or *like* are not used in metaphors.

In works of art and literature, a trip or journey taken by a character is sometimes used as a metaphor for a much less concrete kind of journey. For example, in *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, the trip to Verplancks taken by Tim and his father actually represents a much more abstract kind of journey for Tim—in which he “travels” from boyhood to adulthood. Analyze this trip to Verplancks and how it reflects Tim’s growing maturity.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

depreciation—loss of value, especially in terms of money

militia—an organized, local group of citizens who serve as soldiers in times of emergency

hedgerows—rows of bushes and small trees that are planted like fences around farm fields

swaggering—strutting around; acting conceited

fusillade—rapid firing of many guns at one time

parallel—running in the same exact direction

forceps—a medical instrument with handles like scissors that is used to pull or firmly hold an object

wincing—flinched or drew back in pain

desertion—the act of leaving or abandoning a place or a person

badgered—bothered or annoyed continually

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Pewter is a metal alloy containing large amounts of tin as well as lead. In colonial days, many everyday household utensils were made of pewter, which is silvery gray in color.

A **plowshare** is the part of a plow that cuts the furrow (or groove) in the earth.

A **trainband** was a militia company in colonial New England.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. How does life change for Tim and Mother after Father's disappearance?
2. How is the church that the Meekers attend in conflict with the state?
3. How does Tim realize that he has changed since the beginning of the war?
4. Since the night when Sam came home in uniform, how much time has passed?
5. What does Tim now think about Sam's decision to stay in the army?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “Prices kept going up and up, and **depreciation** of the paper money took a lot of the profit out of it.”
depreciation: _____
2. “Colonel Read had been head of a whole regiment of **militia**, but he’d quit the job.”
militia: _____
3. “I watched, and all at once through the **hedgerows** I caught a glimpse of movement and things flashing.”
hedgerows: _____
4. “At first when the troops had arrived, **swaggering** around so bold and gay, I had really admired them.”
swaggering: _____
5. “There was a commotion in the British ranks, and a quick **fusillade** of shots.”
fusillade: _____
6. “I slid over this wall and began running along it, **parallel** to the road.”
parallel: _____
7. “... four men held the man down flat on a table while Dr. Hobart sliced open the wound and pulled the ball out with his **forceps**.”
forceps: _____
8. “... Father might be dead. Sam **wined**. It hurt him.”
wined: _____
9. ““Mother, I can’t come home. That’s **desertion**, they hang people for that.””
desertion: _____
10. “I came to pay a visit and first Tim **badgered** me about Father and now you’re badgering me about coming home.”
badgered: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. To what does Tim compare the way the tavern feels with Father gone?
 - a. to being in a foreign country without the right dictionary
 - b. to walking into a house that has just been spring-cleaned
 - c. to waking up at night and realizing that the fires have gone out
2. What does Mother say about working on Sunday?
 - a. that God will forgive them
 - b. that it is a great sin
 - c. that Father would never have allowed it
3. Why does Mother think that Sam will come home now?
 - a. He will want to help the family now that Father is gone.
 - b. He must be hungry, tired, and poorly clothed.
 - c. Things are going so badly for the Patriots.
4. Why does Sam think that Mr. Beach is “pretty brave”?
 - a. because he is over seventy-five and still in the militia
 - b. because he still prays for the King and Parliament even though it is illegal
 - c. because he tries to save Captain Betts and Jerry from the British troops
5. During what season do the British troops storm into Captain Betts’s house?
 - a. spring 1777
 - b. summer 1777
 - c. fall 1778
6. Why have the British officers gone to Mr. Heron’s house that morning?
 - a. to have a decent breakfast at the finest house in Redding
 - b. to ask him how to get to Ridgebury as quickly as possible
 - c. to find out where the Rebel leaders are
7. Where does Mr. Read tell Tim to go after the Rebel messenger is shot?
 - a. to Fairfield to deliver the message
 - b. to Dr. Hobart’s house
 - c. to the tavern with the wounded man
8. What does Tim see at Captain Starr’s?
 - a. Ned being killed
 - b. two British officers getting shot
 - c. British troops moving into the house
9. Who does General Wooster meet with at the Meekers’ tavern?
 - a. William Heron
 - b. General Benedict Arnold
 - c. General George Washington
10. What does Mother say about Sam’s pledge not to leave the army until the Redcoats are beaten?
 - a. It is foolish.
 - b. It is brave and honorable.
 - c. His father would be proud of him.

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. As time goes by and Father doesn't come home, what does Mother think?
2. According to Tim, why does business seem good, although really it isn't?
3. Why does Colonel Read really quit his job in the army?
4. Why is it so hard for Tim and his mother to get messages to Sam?
5. What does Tim say is the biggest change of all going on during this time?
6. Who comes running to tell the Meekers that the British troops are coming in April 1777?
7. What does Tim say about the sight of the British soldiers marching into Redding Ridge?
8. Why does Tim suddenly realize that he is a Tory as he speaks with the Redcoat?
9. What does the wounded man say that the British troops are looking for?
10. What does Sam say when Mother reminds him of his duty to his family?

Deepen Your Understanding

In literature, *point of view* is the “lens” through which the person telling the story sees and judges the action and the other characters. In *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, the point of view throughout the story is that of Tim, the narrator. For much of the story, Tim sees the world as the younger brother of his beloved only sibling, Sam.

As the story progresses and Tim matures, his feelings for his brother change somewhat. Write a journal entry *from the point of view of the boys’ mother*, describing Tim’s changed feelings about Sam.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

epidemic—a major outbreak of a disease

merchandise—items that are bought and sold in everyday business

adjutant—a soldier who assists the commanding officer

unscrupulous—having no moral principles; not honest or upright

compunction—a feeling of guilt; anxiety about an action that may have caused harm to someone else

populace—the people who live in a given area; the general population

foreboding—a feeling of dread; a sense that something terrible will happen

compulsory—absolutely required; not optional

clemency—mercy; the act of reducing or ending someone's punishment

commemorate—to remember a person or an event with a formal ceremony, piece of writing, plaque, or other work

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, was where George Washington and the Continental Army camped for the winter of 1777–1778. The Patriot troops suffered there from hunger and cold. Valley Forge represented one of the lowest points in the war for the Americans.

Israel Putnam was a Connecticut farmer whose military career began with the French and Indian War. He later fought in the Revolutionary War, rising to the rank of general. Putnam died of a stroke in 1779, before the end of the war.

The British **exchequer** was England's national bank account or treasury.

Hardtack is a hard biscuit or bread made with flour and water but no salt. It spoiled much less quickly than bread but was much less pleasant to eat.

A **gallows** was a frame from which people were hanged in earlier times. A gallows was generally made of two upright posts with one connecting horizontal post running across the top.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. What is the meaning of Father's final words?
2. How do the different key characters in the book feel now about the war and the men who are fighting in it?
3. How does Mother's character change as the story progresses?
4. How does Tim unintentionally help create the conditions for Sam's capture?
5. When Tim tells his story forty-seven years after Sam's death, what is his opinion about the war?

VI. CHAPTER XII—EPILOGUE

DURING READING

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. "That's what had happened to Father: they'd had an **epidemic** of cholera on the prison ship he'd been on."
epidemic: _____
2. "Prices kept on spiraling upward, **merchandise** grew shorter and shorter in supply, and everybody seemed to be in debt."
merchandise: _____
3. "An **adjutant** came around and asked if any of us were from this area and I said I was, and Colonel Parsons brought me into town this morning to show him around."
adjutant: _____
4. "Some are **unscrupulous** when they're hungry and some are unscrupulous by nature and they'll take whatever they think they can get away with."
unscrupulous: _____
5. "Of course the majority of men are honest and won't steal, but if they decide you're Tories, they'll have no **compunction** about taking your beef."
compunction: _____
6. "Besides, he wants the people to come around to our side, and if he lets the troops forage, he'll lose all sympathy with the **populace**."
populace: _____
7. "She shook her head. 'I have a terrible **foreboding**, Timothy.'"
foreboding: _____
8. "The Sunday before there would be a **compulsory** church attendance."
compulsory: _____
9. "The one thing Putnam cannot do at this point is show **clemency**."
clemency: _____
10. "I have written this story down in this year 1826, on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our nation, to **commemorate** the short life of my brother Samuel Meeker, who died forty-seven years ago in the service of his country."
commemorate: _____

VI. CHAPTER XII—EPILOGUE

DURING READING

*Check Your Understanding**Multiple Choice*

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. When do the Meekers find out that Father is dead?
 - a. June 1777
 - b. October 1777
 - c. January 1778
2. What is odd about the prison ship that Father was on?
 - a. It has been off the coast of Connecticut the whole time, so the family could have visited Father.
 - b. It is the same ship that Jerry Sanford was on.
 - c. It is actually a British ship, not a Rebel one.
3. Which side of the war does Tim finally decide he is on?
 - a. the British
 - b. the Patriot
 - c. neither one
4. What does Tim say that life is like in 1777 and 1778?
 - a. being at a long funeral
 - b. running on a treadmill
 - c. getting blood from a stone
5. How many cows have Tim and Mother been able to get in the fall of 1778?
 - a. eight
 - b. four
 - c. one
6. Why can't Tim take the cows to Verplancks Point as usual?
 - a. Mother refuses to go with him.
 - b. Rebels control the land on his route.
 - c. None are good enough to sell.
7. Why does Sam come back to Redding?
 - a. General Putnam is setting up a winter camp there.
 - b. Sam has one month's leave.
 - c. Sam has come home to take care of the tavern now that Father is dead.
8. What does Sam tell Tim to do with the cattle?
 - a. hide them in the barn all winter so that the soldiers won't steal them
 - b. feed them more so that they fatten up and sell for more money
 - c. butcher them and hide the meat
9. Why does Sam get arrested?
 - a. He gives Mr. Heron information about General Putnam.
 - b. He is accused of being a cattle thief.
 - c. Colonel Parsons catches him at the tavern without permission.
10. What does Tim realize after he is shot and looks back down the hill toward the prisoners' hut?
 - a. Sam has already been killed.
 - b. His bayonet has killed one of the guards.
 - c. The prisoners aren't there anymore.

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What does Father say about his family before he dies?
2. What does Mother say twice after hearing that Jerry has been killed by the British?
3. Why is there very little fighting in the wintertime?
4. What does Tim hope when he hears what a bad winter the Continental Army is having at Valley Forge?
5. What does Tim say that hunger is like?
6. Why does Sam tell Mother to put on her best dress?
7. What is in the greatest demand at the tavern that winter, and why?
8. How does Colonel Parsons explain the thinking of General Putnam?
9. How does Sam answer when Tim asks him what else he and mother can do to help?
10. Where does Tim end up living as an adult, and why?

Deepen Your Understanding

Foreshadowing is a literary technique in which the writing gives hints about what may happen later in the story. Now that you have finished reading *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, look back at the very first sentence of the book. It contains this example of foreshadowing, indicated by the words in bold type: “It was April, and outside in the dark the rain whipped against the windows of our tavern, **making a sound like muffled drums.**”

How does the imagery of “muffled drums” foreshadow certain events that happen later in the story? Explore this concept, using examples from the text.

End-of-Book Test

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. What disturbs the peace of the Meekers' dinner on the April night when the story begins?
 - a. Sam's arrival home
 - b. the battle of Lexington and Concord
 - c. Father hitting Sam for talking back
2. For which side is Sam fighting in this war?
 - a. the Tories
 - b. the Loyalists
 - c. the Patriots
3. What makes the people of Redding different from the people in New Haven?
 - a. They don't go to college as often in Redding.
 - b. They are mostly Loyalists in Redding.
 - c. They are mostly Patriots in Redding.
4. Why does Father order Sam to leave the house?
 - a. because Sam is being disrespectful and dropping out of Yale
 - b. because Sam is trying to force Tim to join the army
 - c. because Sam is a Rebel and Father calls it treason
5. How does Tim often feel while Sam is gone?
 - a. Sam gets all the glory, while Tim does all the chores.
 - b. Father and Mother think that Sam is being a hero and Tim isn't.
 - c. All of the neighbors are wondering why Tim hasn't enlisted, too.
6. After Sam leaves town with the Brown Bess, how many times does he return to Redding over the following two years?
 - a. twice
 - b. three times
 - c. four times
7. Why does the officer cut Father with his sword in the tavern?
 - a. because Father refuses to serve ale to a Rebel, even an officer
 - b. because the officer doesn't believe Father when he says he no longer has a gun
 - c. because Father has tried to attack him with a butcher knife
8. What does Tim do when Sam returns to Tom Warrups's hut in November?
 - a. He tells Father that he knows where Sam is hiding.
 - b. He tries to steal back the Brown Bess.
 - c. He tells Tom to call the head of the militia and turn Sam in.
9. During the first year of the war, what was one of the worst problems for the people in Redding?
 - a. having their cows in the field stolen by soldiers
 - b. having to pay such high taxes to the British
 - c. watching the Patriot houses get attacked by Loyalists

(continued)

End-of-Book Test (continued)

10. Why does Mr. Heron come into the tavern in April 1776?
 - a. to try to find out how much the Meekers know about Sam's regiment
 - b. to hire Sam as an apprentice surveyor
 - c. to ask Tim to deliver some letters for him
11. What does Father say happens to people on the prison ships?
 - a. They die of cholera or some other disease.
 - b. They get killed by the guards.
 - c. They are slowly starved to death.
12. What happens to Tim on the Fairfield Road?
 - a. He is caught by a Rebel officer who rides by.
 - b. Betsy steals his letter.
 - c. He is ambushed by cow-boys.
13. Why do Mother and Father have a fight about letters?
 - a. Father does not want Mother delivering letters for Mr. Heron.
 - b. Mother wants Father to write to Sam more often.
 - c. Father does not want Mother to write to Sam.
14. How many miles is it from Redding to Verplancks Point?
 - a. about thirty miles
 - b. about forty miles
 - c. about fifty miles
15. What does the first group of cow-boys do to Father?
 - a. They take him away.
 - b. They hit him.
 - c. They steal half of his cattle.
16. When Tim wants to rescue Father from the cow-boys, what question does he ask himself in order to do "the smartest thing"?
 - a. What would Father do?
 - b. What would Sam do?
 - c. What would General Putnam do?
17. What does Tim say some people call Sam?
 - a. heroic
 - b. cruel
 - c. pigheaded
18. Who says, "It seemed to me that we'd been free all along"?
 - a. Tim
 - b. Father
 - c. Mr. Beach
19. When Sam comes back to Redding in April 1777, what does Tim realize for the first time?
 - a. that Sam is going to die
 - b. that Father has made a mistake about Sam
 - c. that Sam is wrong about something
20. What are Sam's last words to Tim?
 - a. "You're the best brother I've got, Tim."
 - b. "Take good care of Mother."
 - c. "I'm sorry about Father and the way we parted."

Answer Key

I. CHAPTERS I–II

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definitions based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. b |
| 2. a | 7. c |
| 3. b | 8. c |
| 4. c | 9. a |
| 5. c | 10. c |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. The door slams open and bangs against the wall; the plates rattle.
2. He envies Sam.
3. He is proud and excited; he likes being the center of attention.
4. Father thinks that Sam is eating rudely, he is upset by the news of the British soldiers being beaten, he believes that Sam is speaking treason, and he is upset that Sam has enlisted.
5. He says that Redding has many more Tories than other parts of Connecticut and the colonies.
6. He hits Sam.
7. Boasting is pride, and pride is a sin.
8. He has run to Tom Warrups's hut, because it is conveniently near home.
9. They run the tavern and general store.
10. The narrator tells about how Sam often describes his debates at college: "I scored a telling point, Tim." Now the reader knows that the narrator's name is Tim.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary, but should include all or most of the following features used by the authors to describe setting: two maps are included at the beginning of the book; Yale and New Haven are mentioned by Sam; characters refer to the Boston Tea Party as well as the first fighting of the Revolutionary War (Lexington and Concord); Tim describes the tavern

and store interiors in detail; Tim describes Redding Ridge versus Redding Center and names many other towns in the region; Tim tells about the families living in his neighborhood and where their houses and fields are located; he also describes the kinds of siding they have (shingles for simple houses, clapboards for richer people like Mr. Heron); Tim gives physical details to describe Tom Warrups's hut.

II. CHAPTERS III–IV

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definitions based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a |
| 2. c | 7. c |
| 3. a | 8. b |
| 4. c | 9. a |
| 5. a | 10. b |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. In these early months of the war, the Battle of Bunker Hill and the capture of Fort Ticonderoga occur. Tory newspapers are also banned, and the Connecticut General Assembly orders that all Tories be disarmed.
2. He pushes him out the door and into the mud.
3. They come from Hartford, New Haven, New York, and Boston.
4. They swim in the mill stream, climb trees, play mumble-the-peg, spin tops, or play duck on the rock. On rainy days, they visit Tom Warrups to hear stories.
5. She says that Betsy's mother doesn't want her to spend the day idling. She also tells Betsy to leave because "Idle hands make the Devil's work."
6. She makes him swear that he will not tell his father if Sam comes back to Redding.
7. He waits from September until November—

somewhere between two and three months.

8. He cuts back through the woodlot and across the snowy fields so that he can approach the kitchen from the rear.
9. He runs to Tom Warrups's hut to try to recover Father's gun from Sam.
10. He calls him a coward (although he says he doesn't mean it) because Sam won't go home with him to help Father.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary, but should include examples of Tim's feelings of inferiority to both Sam and Betsy, his idolizing of Sam, his obedient nature and respect for authority figures like his parents and the church, his unquestioning acceptance of the rules, and his desire to have things stay the same.

III. CHAPTERS V–VI

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definitions based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. c |
| 2. a | 7. a |
| 3. c | 8. b |
| 4. b | 9. c |
| 5. b | 10. b |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. It is a very thin scar that you can barely see.
2. They mostly need guns to shoot the wolves that come into their pastures, for general protection, and occasionally for hunting.
3. He says that it means no more milk, butter, or cheese.
4. The prices of everything the Meekers need to buy in order to run their tavern and store have gone up. Therefore, the Meekers are, in turn, forced to raise the prices of what they sell.
5. When Sam was at Yale, Tim didn't have to worry that he would die.
6. No one knows where Mr. Heron's money comes from.
7. He says that Tim will look less suspicious walking

to Fairfield than an Indian.

8. Tim wants something to boast about to Sam; he wants some of the "glory" and excitement that he thinks Sam is having.
9. There was a separate study with a coal stove, a carpet, a desk, and some chests of drawers. (These furnishings were generally considered luxuries in colonial times.)
10. It will take about ten hours.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary, but should include all or some of the following conflicts: the major conflict between England and America, the conflict between Tories and Patriots in Redding and other parts of New England, the conflict between Sam and his father, the conflict between Tim and Betsy, Tim's inner conflict about which side he is on, Tim's conflict with Sam over the gun, Father's conflict with the Patriot soldier who wants his gun, the conflict between church and state (the Tory church has been forbidden by the Connecticut General Assembly to pray for King George III and Parliament), and the conflict between troops on both sides and the people whose cattle they stole.

Students' predictions about the outcomes of these various conflicts will vary—except, of course, for the overall outcome of the Revolutionary War.

IV. CHAPTERS VII–IX

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definitions based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a |
| 2. c | 7. c |
| 3. b | 8. a |
| 4. a | 9. b |
| 5. c | 10. c |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. He never says anything at all about it.
2. They are living a hard life, with very little food, clothing that is not warm enough, and sometimes no shoes.
3. She says that she is going to write to him anyway.

4. Sam is away and Tom Warrups, the usual substitute, is busy.
5. Verplancks Point is a busy trading town on the Hudson River. The Meekers can sell their cattle there; they can also buy all of the supplies they need for their tavern and store.
6. The closer to wintertime they sell their cattle, the scarcer beef is, and thus the higher the price the Meekers can get for the animals.
7. Father doesn't care who buys the beef.
8. Another group of riders—this time, Loyalists—comes up and scares the cow-boys away.
9. He says that neighbors are turning against neighbors and that there is almost open warfare between Rebels and Tories.
10. He tricks them into thinking that an armed escort is about to ambush them.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary, but should include some discussion about how the trip to Verplancks Point is a rite of passage for Tim. This is his first major trip away from home, and Father is consulting with him as one adult to another. Tim actually uses his wits and his courage to help save the situation on a few occasions on the road: on the way to Verplancks Point, when he shouts at his father and influences him to get off his horse for the cow-boy; on that same occasion, when he decides to make a run for the nearby farmhouse to get help; on the trip home, when he cleverly makes the cow-boys believe that they are about to be ambushed by a group of armed Tory riders. This is the first time in his life when Tim has consciously decided to think about what Father (an experienced adult) would do rather than his beloved brother Sam, whose flaws he is beginning to see. Tim has matured into an independent thinker and a responsible, resourceful young man.

V. CHAPTERS X–XI

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definitions based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. c |
| 2. a | 7. b |
| 3. a | 8. a |
| 4. b | 9. b |
| 5. a | 10. a |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. She thinks that he is on a prison ship and that he will come home when the war is over.
2. The tavern and the store are very busy with customers, but most people are paying with money that is worthless for the time being.
3. He says he is too old, but in fact he is against the war and does not want to fight.
4. They don't know where Sam is right now, and neither does Betsy.
5. He says the biggest change is the one going on inside himself.
6. Samuel Smith's black slave, Ned, is the one who alerts the Meekers.
7. It is a frightening sight; it looks as if the marching men will never stop coming.
8. He believes that his father's capture by the Rebels has made him a true Tory.
9. The British want to seize the stores of munitions in Danbury.
10. He says that his duty to his country comes first.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary.

VI. CHAPTER XII—EPILOGUE

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definitions based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. b |
| 2. c | 7. a |
| 3. c | 8. c |
| 4. b | 9. b |
| 5. a | 10. c |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. He says that he loves them and that he forgives

- Sam; he says that Sam is brave but headstrong.
2. She says that the war has turned the men who are fighting into animals.
 3. In the wintertime, the men get very cold and often sick; it is also hard to march in the snow.
 4. He hopes that the Rebels will be driven to give up the fighting very soon.
 5. He says it's like walking around with a nail in your shoe.
 6. Sam is joking with his mother about the fact that Colonel Parsons wants to "meet the ladies" of Redding; the assumption is that the Colonel might stop by the tavern.
 7. Liquor is in the greatest demand, because it provides the soldiers' only relief from the cold, miserable camp life.
 8. He says that General Putnam is determined to make an example out of someone (to serve as a lesson to his troops and keep them obedient).
 9. Sam asks them to pray; he tries to joke and says that Mother would be better at this than Tim.
 10. He ends up in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where new land is becoming available and surveyors are in demand.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary, but students should make the

connection between the sound of muffled drums and marching soldiers (war) or even military funerals (death). This auditory image of drumbeats, with its associated impending doom, is deliberately repeated in the text; students should include at least one of the following examples in their written responses: in Chapter IV, the narrator refers to the "heavy drum roll sound" of horses' hooves when the Continental soldiers ride into Redding; in Chapter X, a drummer boy is "banging away" on his drum at the head of the line as the British troops march into town one terrifying day; in Chapter XIV, there is a drummer "playing a slow roll" as Sam is escorted to his execution.

END-OF-BOOK TEST

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. a | 11. a |
| 2. c | 12. b |
| 3. b | 13. c |
| 4. c | 14. b |
| 5. a | 15. b |
| 6. a | 16. a |
| 7. b | 17. c |
| 8. b | 18. a |
| 9. a | 19. c |
| 10. c | 20. a |